

# [The YALI Times](#)

In May, YALI Network members were invited to [share stories](#) of people creating positive change in their communities. More than 100 stories were submitted. From young women enhancing education with technology to public servants helping citizens fight corruption in their court system, each entry revealed the great work YALI Network members are doing to improve their communities. Click on the titles in blue below to expand each section and read the winning submissions.

## [In Nigeria, Change Comes One Piece at a Time](#)

In parts of Nigeria, poor sanitation, indiscriminate waste disposal, inadequate waste separation and ill-conceived landfill locations have resulted in the constant outbreak of cholera, typhoid, malaria and sometimes death.

Recently, there has been a loud cry from citizens about the effect poorly managed waste is having on the environment. Some Nigerians have taken the lead to curb this menace. One is Cajetan Okeke, co-founder of Alamonk Recyclers Ltd.

“Alamonk Recyclers is a hybrid company that recycles tons of waste each month. It also teaches community members the best steps to proper waste management. In an interview with Okeke, he said the idea was born out of a bid to save the environment and to make money from waste.

“The tonnes of recyclables that end in unsanitary landfills gave me concern and inspired me to begin a recycling company,” Okeke said.

“Focusing on recycling will not effect adequate social change on the people,” Okeke added. “In this line we have initiated programs that will educate the people on proper waste separation, disposal and recycling, because recycling is more effective when it is community-based.”

“Alamonk Recyclers is still at the startup stage. The company operates in Abia state, Nigeria, and has attracted federal grants and state support. Alamonk Recyclers participates in a live radio program where people talk about the steps to managing waste properly and listeners can call in to give their opinion and ask questions. The company also moves around streets, collects people’s waste and gives incentives for those who separate their waste.

“Okeke and his team believe that a veritable step in this journey is education and, ultimately, a mindset change. Together with his team, Okeke is working hard to reach as many people as possible.

“It is a change that when embraced by many will be beneficial to the world at large. Even little actions affect the world with time.

*This article was written by Benedine Obiekea of Nigeria and was submitted as part of a citizen journalism initiative. It has been edited for clarity and length. The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.*

## **How Shalom Beat the Stigma of HIV**

For every story of a life claimed by AIDS, there is another of bravery, compassion and solidarity.

Shalom Kaseketi's history is one such story.

Kaseketi did not choose to remain silent about his HIV status and the stigma around it. Now 19, he was born with the disease and went public about his status when he was only 12. In so doing, he has become a role model for his peers.

In 2006, I accompanied the young Kaseketi, then a youth ambassador for an NGO, as he discussed HIV prevention with young people in schools, support groups and churches, at sports events and even in their homes. He said then that he had lost three sisters, a brother and his father to the disease.

These days, Kaseketi stands tall and proud at about two metres. He has a mellifluous voice, a positive spirit and a forward outlook. He puts aside his own concerns and talks of his new project.

"There has been a lot of alcohol and drug abuse in the area, so I decided to move in. ... I started a football team and now I am a coach," Kaseketi said. He helps the kids see that there is more to life than just drinking and drug abuse.

Kaseketi acquired the disease from his HIV-positive mother, who is still alive. Speaking of his 19 years of living with HIV, Kaseketi admitted that it was not easy going through the education system. Stigma, he said, is still an issue that many children living with the virus struggle with every day in schools.

"You can't force stigma out. In one way or another I have experienced it even in this day and age," Kaseketi said. "I have seen kids crying, telling me they don't know what to do. You don't know whether it is something you should confront or you just talk to the people themselves. It is really tough."

*This article was written by Charles Mafa of Zambia and was submitted as part of a citizen journalism initiative. It has been edited for clarity and length. The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.*

## **Environmental Group Breaks from Routine**

Purity Wanjohi and Kevin Okech are the two faces behind Mazingira Safi Initiative (MSI), a community-based organization in Nairobi, Kenya, with a mission to inspire change in how Nairobi residents treat the environment.

The two have run the initiative alongside other members for almost two years and have shown dedication in mobilizing volunteer students and youths to achieve this mission.

In March, they rallied their team to do something different from the routine community cleanups and environmental education. March is Women's History Month, a theme meant to recognize, appreciate and celebrate all that women and girls contribute to society — and to create more awareness of the need to support them.

In recognition of the month and its theme, Wanjohi and Okech organized a visit to Maryfaith Children's Home, a rescue shelter for sexually and physically abused girls. Located in Riruta Satellite, Nairobi, the shelter houses more than 50 girls ranging from infancy to age 18.

Wanjohi and Okech raised roughly \$200 to purchase foodstuffs, sanitary towels and toiletries, items the shelter determined were most needed. The girls were very happy, and they enjoyed hanging out with the MSI team.

Despite the fun, the visit was also sobering. Interacting with the girls and listening to their stories, one is made to realize that there is a dark force detaching humans from their sense of humanity. Most of these girls had gone through dehumanizing experiences in the hands of their guardians, denying them a chance to hope and dream.

The team from MSI was very deliberate to encourage them to keep hope alive. The innocence of children has to be protected and a sense of confidence built inside them.

The shelter's founder, Margaret Mwangi, said in one session, "I need the government to protect our girls, the law to defend them, and the community to accept them."

The visit was simply a reminder that we all cannot cease to counter ignorance, increase awareness to stop domestic violence, and support young girls and women to pursue their dreams. There are little things that we all can do.

*This article was written by Kevin Okech of Kenya and was submitted as part of a citizen journalism initiative. It has been edited for clarity and length. The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.*

## **Volunteer Helps Children Turn the Page**

Shittu, a man in his 30s, read the title of a book and asked the owner for its meaning. An implausible idea for some, but worse realities exist in Nigeria where an estimated 40 million to 45 million people are illiterate.

Thousands of preteens cannot boast of Shittu's English language proficiency, and is it any wonder when the education sector received 10.7 percent of the national budget in 2014?

While most young people take delight in using social media to revile the first lady of Nigeria on her gaffes and grammatical blunders, people such as Chisomebi Okoroafor, an architect by training, a project manager and YALI Network member by choice, take positive steps to battle semi-illiteracy among youth.

Okoroafor gives her time and finances as a volunteer in children-centered initiatives such as Slum2School and Feed-A-Child. Every year, Okoroafor coordinates activities in summer camps for disadvantaged primary school students. In August 2013, she joined the volunteer staff of the Education Resource Group Summer Camp, a subsidiary of the Awesome Treasures Foundation.

The staff tutored 120 children ages 10-15, selected from government schools in Ilupeju vicinity in Lagos state. The children were taught subjects such as general mathematics, English, science,

French, etiquette and basic sex education.

Okoroafor also holds art classes for some children in her neighbourhood. She plans to start book clubs to help children older than 12 years of age learn to read.

“In 10 years, I want to have made a tangible impact in my nation in a positive way,” Okoroafor says.

*This article was written by Patricia Ogunleye of Nigeria and was submitted as part of a citizen journalism initiative. It has been edited for clarity and length. The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.*

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## Stories with Purpose: Inspiring Action and Change

Stories with purpose don't just materialize — they're strategically planned, creatively crafted and designed to achieve measurable outcomes.

From the oral traditions of the past to the digital techniques of the present, stories have always been a crucial part of human communication. However, with the advent of the Internet and digital media, the face of storytelling has changed. So, how can we combine age-old traditions with emerging technologies to ensure that your stories have maximum motivating power and impact?

That's where [Hatch for Good](#) comes in. The site is a great place to start if you are seeking to leverage the power of storytelling — something that nonprofits often find exciting but also daunting. [Hattaway Communications](#), with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, developed this platform specifically for storytelling in the digital age, so that people and organizations that have big ideas can connect to the tools and strategies they need — to create high-impact stories that inspire others to take action.

After launching Hatch for Good in late 2014, members of the Hattaway team traveled across the globe to Kenya, India and Thailand to help social impact organizations become storytelling organizations. I was fortunate enough to be a part of that team and witnessed firsthand the most immediate storytelling needs of nonprofits. Every region has its set of unique challenges, but there were three crosscutting areas of interest.

1. Building Strategy and Capacity. Often, social impact organizations dive into storytelling without articulating clear goals, understanding the interests and motivations of key audiences, or setting measurable objectives.

Our [Strategy Toolkit](#) is carefully designed to help build your “Narrative Framework,” the overarching story that helps provide structure and consistency for all individual stories your

organization will tell.

To complement your strategy, the [Capacity Toolkit](#) is designed to help you understand the resources and skills you need to become a storytelling organization. 

2. **Creating Stories that Capture Attention and Imagination.** In today's competitive media environment, only the most compelling content gets noticed and shared. Storytelling is both an art and a science — and stories for social impact must show people as active agents of change, who play a central role in creating solutions to the problems they face.

In the [Content Toolkit](#), we'll help you sketch your story based on the Social Impact Story Map adapted from a tried-and-true formula seen in narratives from Homer to Hollywood. 

3. **Engaging Communities and Measuring Impact.** With an inordinate number of digital tools available, social impact organizations struggle to understand which to use to most effectively engage their audiences. There's no one-size-fits-all solution. The [Platform Toolkit](#) aims to provide customized tips based on your audiences and technology. While I was in Nairobi, most organizations found our guides on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to be very practical and useful for promoting their stories. [These guides](#) contain best practices for making the most of popular social networks — whether you're a social media expert or a beginner.

To understand what's working in your stories, you can evaluate the impact of your storytelling on an ongoing basis — so you can learn what's working and adjust your strategy accordingly. Our [Evaluation Toolkit](#) and [guides](#) explain how best to measure the impact of your storytelling efforts.

We hope this is a helpful introduction to how you can harness the power of storytelling to communicate stories of impact, using a sound strategy, compelling content and the right digital tools — and inspire people to take action to create change worldwide.

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## [Using Blogging to Tell Your Organization's Story](#)

The [YALI Network blog](#) is a platform that enables us to share powerful stories of YALI Network members and to provide expert advice on subjects YALI Network members care about. You, too, can use blogging to share your stories and engage your audience.

Blogs are excellent Web-based platforms to host and maintain records of creative content and stories. Your blogging platform can host text, images and embedded videos, and provide a landing page that can be linked to various sources of traditional and social media channels/platforms.

There are multiple platforms available for blogging, including [WordPress](#), [Joomla](#), [Django](#) and

[Drupal](#), among others. These platforms are versatile and allow you to create blogs that can expand reach and resources by connecting with audiences emotionally.

The most effective way to share stories on your blog is to plan ahead and create a detailed editorial calendar for producing original content. Most blogging platforms have built-in capabilities to schedule and publish posts according to your organization's editorial calendar.

You can increase the visibility of your blog by being active and consistent, by sharing your blog posts through social media and email, by inviting experts in your field to contribute as guest bloggers, and by talking about stories that tie into current events.

*This article is adapted from Hatch for Good's [Guide to Blogging and CMS](#). Hatch for Good is a platform that provides people and organizations with the tools they need to create powerful stories and inspire positive action in the digital age. Visit [Hatch for Good's website](#) to view additional resources.*

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## [Using Twitter to Tell Your Organization's Story](#)

Every month, thousands of YALI Network members engage policymakers, experts and entrepreneurs during exclusive #YALICHats on [Twitter](#). But that isn't all that Twitter can do for you.

Twitter is an online social networking and microblogging tool to send and read short, 140-character text messages, called "tweets." Users access Twitter through its website interface, desktop application, SMS or mobile device application.

Twitter is often used for instantly spreading news and information. It can be compared to a news channel — you can discover news as it's happening, learn more about topics that are important to you and get the inside scoop in real time.

If you have something quick to say and have the capacity to say it often, Twitter could be your platform of choice. Twitter is also heavily used for live tweeting and live events.

The most effective way to share stories on Twitter is to plan ahead by building an editorial calendar and scheduling your tweets in advance with applications like [Hootsuite](#), [TweetDeck](#) or [Buffer](#). Plan to post at least three tweets per day. Short and simple text and photos work best.

You can maximize your visibility on Twitter by starting discussions with influential people, posing questions, following others and using relevant hashtags in your tweets.

*This article is adapted from Hatch for Good's [Guide to Twitter](#). Hatch for Good is a platform that provides people and organizations with the tools they need to create powerful stories and inspire*

positive action in the digital age. Visit [Hatch for Good's website](#) to view additional resources.

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## [Using LinkedIn to Tell Your Organization's Story](#)

Did you know that nearly 5,000 YALI Network members use the [YALI Network LinkedIn Group](#) to connect with one another and to grow their professional networks?

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social network that helps its users make professional connections, find jobs, discover leads and more. Users create their own professional profiles — similar to a digital resume — and establish connections with colleagues, potential partners and businesses.

If you are looking to share stories with an educated, affluent and professional audience, consider using LinkedIn. Its ability to engage a highly targeted, donor-rich demographic makes it a powerful distribution channel for social impact organizations.

The best way to share stories on LinkedIn is through status updates on your organization's Company Page. When sharing content on LinkedIn, be sure to post links and use images. Posts with links to other content have twice the engagement rate of posts without, and posts with images have a 98 percent higher comment rate.

Organizations should engage with their LinkedIn followers on a regular basis by encouraging them to participate in the conversations spurred by the stories you share in your status updates. You can further this participation by asking follow-up questions and writing status updates with clear calls to action.

To increase your organization's visibility on LinkedIn, you should create original content, encourage others to share your content, and give people a clear reason to engage with your content.

This article is adapted from Hatch for Good's [Guide to LinkedIn](#). Hatch for Good is a platform that provides people and organizations with the tools they need to create powerful stories and inspire positive action in the digital age. Visit [Hatch for Good's website](#) to view additional resources.

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## [Journalist Brings Positive Change to Nigerian Communities](#)

Oluwatoyosi (Toyosi) Ogunseye 

For years, the steel plant in Lagos, Nigeria, emitted noxious fumes, annoying local residents. So journalist Oluwatoyosi (Toyosi) Ogunseye decided to investigate.

Ogunseye convinced her employer, Punch Nigeria Limited, to pay to test the health of a group of residents. The results of the residents' blood, urine and drinking water tests revealed poisonous metals in their bodies that were developing into cancers, asthma and other ailments.

Punch Nigeria publishes Punch, Nigeria's most widely read newspaper, and Ogunseye's investigation became a three-part series linking the plant's fumes to the residents' ailments.

Soon after Ogunseye's series appeared in Punch, the government ordered the plant closed and allowed it to reopen only under strict new regulations. The plant's owner agreed to compensate residents.

This wasn't the first time one of Ogunseye's investigations sparked positive change. When another story revealed a children's ward in a government-owned hospital was under-equipped, the government bought more incubators for high-risk infants and increased its support of other facilities that serve children. "I like to reveal the story behind the story," she said.

Her experience shows that accurate and fair journalism can make a difference in peoples' lives.

"I went into journalism because of my passion to make positive changes in the society," said the 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow and YALI Network member.

## **Building a Career in Journalism**

In her second year as a university biochemistry student, then-20-year-old Ogunseye landed her first reporting job with the Sun newspapers. One of her first investigative stories was about four students who suddenly died after attending a disco.

Since her first days with Sun, Ogunseye has earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in biochemistry from the University of Lagos, a bachelor's in media and communications from Pan-Atlantic University, and a Ph.D. in politics and international relations from the University of Leicester.

Now Punch's first female editor and its youngest, the 31-year-old has 11 years of experience as an investigative journalist writing about topics such as politics, crime, business, health and the environment. Ogunseye, who lives in Lagos, also teaches media ethics at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism.

An inspiration to the next generation of journalists, Ogunseye advises reporters to observe what their peers are doing well and not so well. "Ensure that your content is better than the competitor's while ensuring that their weakness is your strength."

She advises people who read newspapers, listen to radio or learn about current events online to "consume media responsibly. ... It will give you a balanced perspective of issues."

Ogunseye has received numerous professional awards, including the Knight International Journalism

Award for outstanding news coverage that makes a difference in the lives of people around the world and the CNN MultiChoice African Journalist of the Year Award.

She hopes one day to be president of Nigeria. "I believe I understand the challenges of my country," she says.

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## Media Literacy: Five Core Concepts

They are on your mobile phones and computer screens, in newspapers and magazines, stretched across billboards and broadcast through radio waves. They are mediated messages, and you are inundated with them every day.

With so many viewpoints, it's hard to separate [fact from fiction](#). To guide your exploration of the media that surround you, the [Center for Media Literacy](#) developed these five core concepts:

- 1. All media messages are constructed.** Media texts are built just as surely as buildings and highways are built. The key behind this concept is figuring out who constructed the message, out of what materials and to what effect.
- 2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.** Each form of communication has its own creative language: scary music heightens fear, camera close-ups convey intimacy, big headlines signal significance. Understanding the grammar, syntax and metaphor of media language helps us to be less susceptible to manipulation.
- 3. Different people experience the same media message differently.** Audiences play a role in interpreting media messages because each audience member brings to the message a unique set of life experiences. Differences in age, gender, education and cultural upbringing will generate unique interpretations.
- 4. Media have embedded values and points of view.** Because they are constructed, media messages carry a subtext of who and what is important — at least to the person or people creating the message. The choice of a character's age, gender or race, the selection of a setting, and the actions within the plot are just some of the ways that values become "embedded" in a television show, a movie or an advertisement.
- 5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.** Much of the world's media were developed as money-making enterprises. Newspapers and magazines lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most television watching. Now, the Internet has become an international platform through which groups or individuals can attempt to persuade.

By considering the core concepts behind every media message, you equip yourself with an ability to

analyze and interpret a message — and to accept or reject its legitimacy.

To learn more about these core concepts, download the Center for Media Literacy's [free toolkit](#). The Center for Media Literacy is an organization that helps people make sense of today's complex media environment.

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## [Media Literacy: Five Key Questions](#)

What separates a newspaper from a tabloid or a legitimate website from a hoax? Knowing how to distinguish [fact from fiction](#). To encourage people to think more critically about the media they are consuming, the [Center for Media Literacy](#) developed these five questions one should consider:

1. Who created this message?
2. What techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might people understand this message differently?
4. What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why was this message sent?

By asking these questions regularly about the messages you see, read and hear, you can become more media literate, better formulate your own opinions and better express these opinions in public debates or discussions.

The Center for Media Literacy is an organization that teaches people how to make sense of our complex media environment. You can learn more about media literacy by downloading the organization's [free toolkit on media literacy education](#).

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## [Can You Separate Fact from Fiction?](#)

As our media consumption increases, so does our need for media literacy. (Adam   
Jones/Flickr)

In 2014, South Africans spent 8.2 hours a day consuming media on the Internet. They weren't in the lead. According to [market-research](#) firm GlobalWebIndex, Filipinos won that distinction, by spending 9.6 hours a day accessing the Internet from their desktops, laptops and mobile devices.

That is a lot of time. And it underscores the need for people everywhere to be media literate.

## What is media literacy?

Whether online, on television or in newspapers, people are bombarded with messages. Media literacy is about understanding how and why messages are being communicated. It starts with asking the right questions: Who created this message? What words or images are used in this message and why? How is this message supposed to make me feel?

## Why is media literacy important?

Media literacy teaches you to think critically about the information you consume. These skills — asking relevant questions, exploring multiple viewpoints, making novel connections — aren't just important in the living room, or wherever else you might watch television or check a smartphone. Critical thinking helps you do well in many pursuits, whether in the classroom or the boardroom.

The [Center for Media Literacy](#) has identified five more reasons to understand today's media-soaked environment:

1. You need two skills to be engaged citizens of a democracy: critical thinking and self-expression. Media literacy instills both.
2. You are exposed to more media messages in one day than previous generations were exposed to in a year. Media literacy teaches you the skills to navigate safely through these messages.
3. Media exerts a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act. Media literacy helps you understand outside influences and empowers you to make better decisions.
4. The world is increasingly influenced by visual images. Learning how to "read" through layers of image-based communication is just as necessary as learning to analyze text-based communication.
5. Media literacy helps you understand where information comes from, whose interests may be being served and how to find alternative views.

## How can I become media literate?

Examine what you read, watch and hear. By doing this often, you'll become more aware of its purpose and better able to separate fact from fiction. For in-depth resources about media literacy, visit the [Center for Media Literacy's online reading room](#) and the [National Association for Media Literacy Education's resource hub](#).

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# Veteran Journalist Discusses Free Media in Latest #YALICHAT

“Journalists should be friends to facts and issues as opposed to personalities or politicians. What’s important is accountability.”

This is how Ugandan-born American journalist Shaka Ssali described the responsibility of journalists during a May 12 #YALICHat. The host of the popular program [Straight Talk Africa](#) responded to questions from YALI Network members as follow-up to his guest [blog post](#).

The veteran journalist said he was drawn to journalism “because I wanted to advocate for social justice and give a voice to the voiceless.” Journalism also gives him “the opportunity to put people in authority in a position where they are held accountable,” he said.

Here are some other highlights from Ssali’s #YALICHat:

*I’m profoundly honored & exceedingly humbled to have the opportunity to interact with [@YALInetwork](#). #YALICHAT [pic.twitter.com/iWZ4TJcXj4](http://pic.twitter.com/iWZ4TJcXj4)*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

*.[@ndzomoaurelien](#) [@YALINetwork](#) You have to do your homework, report news with neither fear, nor favor #YALICHAT*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

*.[@ladumdum](#) When Africa can overcome socio-political obstacles & practice journalism that reflects the realities of the Mother continent.*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

*.[@Sir\\_Ruffy](#) To be a good journalist you have to have the passion to be a servant to the truth, because it is a calling not an occupation.*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

*.[@dshekuza](#) [@YALINetwork](#) Citizen journalism plays an important role in [#Africa](#), even better in tandem with traditional journalism #YALICHAT*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

*.[@GenuineRamabote](#) [@VOANews](#) If the mistake belongs to the media institution, it should be acknowledged & corrected immediately #YALICHAT*

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

[.@tunde\\_aribisala](#) Where there is no free media internet journalism can be a catalyst. In other cases can play a complementary role [#YALICHAT](#)

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

[.@kennedytetteh](#) The role of media in [#Africa](#) is to inform, educate, provoke, to expose social injustices & hold people in power accountable.

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

[.@GenuineRamabote](#) [@YALINetwork](#) I do my job with neither favor, nor fear. [#YALICHAT](#)

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

Time is not our best ally. Get better Africa and not bitter. Let's keep the African hope alive. [#YALICHAT](#) [pic.twitter.com/XsClN2ulEq](https://pic.twitter.com/XsClN2ulEq)

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

On that note, thank you all for following and asking your questions.

— Straight Talk Africa (@VOAShaka) [May 12, 2015](#)

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